United Nations S/PV.7781

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7781st meeting

Tuesday, 4 October 2016, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Churkin	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Moustafa
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2016/812)

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16-30714 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President (*spoke in Russian*): As this is the first public meeting of the Council for the month of October, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Ambassador Gerard Van Bohemen, Permanent Representative of New Zealand, for his service as President of the Council for the month of September. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Van Bohemen and his delegation for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2016/812)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Sudan to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/812, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ladsous.

Mr. Ladsous (*spoke in French*): I should like to thank you, Sir, for giving me this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the situation in Darfur. The latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/812), issued on 27 September, provides updates on the main developments in the situation. I should therefore like to focus today on some of the most salient points in the report and on several important events that have taken place in the past week.

First, with respect to the security situation, we must acknowledge that the situation in the Jebel Marra region of Central Darfur remains volatile. The fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid that took place from January to May has somewhat abated in intensity but has never stopped altogether. Since June, there have been new skirmishes and frequent aerial bombardments in the area. There is a sense that the security situation deteriorated further as of 17 September, when there were reports of heavy fighting around Gulo and Guldo, situated north-east of Nertiti in Central Darfur. Other clashes have also occurred in western Jebel Marra, in which at least nine villages have been attacked.

Unfortunately, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) is not in a position to confirm these reports or to evaluate the military situation with any precision because, I am compelled to reiterate, the Government of the Sudan continues to impose access restrictions. However, we have our ears to the ground, and as the recent clashes seem to demonstrate, since the Sudanese Government launched its offensive in January its forces have only partially succeeded in achieving their objective of dislodging the fighters of the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid from their operational bases in the foothills of Jebel Marra. Continued fighting in recent weeks is clearly worrisome, given the fact that the dry season, which has just begun, is usually the optimal time for large-scale military operations.

Moreover, we have received limited and conflicting information on the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid. The movement continues to deny having lost ground and suffered losses in Jebel Marra, while the Government maintains that the entire region is under the control of regular forces and that the recent rebel attacks were really only desperate attempts to give the illusion that the Abdul Wahid movement had survived politically and militarily.

(*spoke in English*)

The security situation in other parts of Darfur remained calm but with a sporadic seasonal spike in violence between pastoralists and farmers over the use and management of water and grazing land. Outbreaks of intercommunal and intracommunal violence occurred in some hotspot areas, amid a reduction in

the number of large-scale conflicts. Local authorities continued to take measures to contain the situation by facilitating peace agreements and ensuring the presence of Government forces in the more sensitive areas. Khartoum also announced a strategy to address intercommunal conflicts and curb criminality by, among other measures, the regulation and control of weapons. That certainly is encouraging recognition of the seriousness of the situation.

But, beyond those measures, complex challenges in terms of governance and development still need to be addressed in order to try to restore the social fabric and peaceful coexistence among communities in a region crippled by over a decade of conflict. UNAMID continues to support central and local Government initiatives to restore peace and stability in communities. Of course, the Mission remains focused on the core objective given by the Council — to protect civilians. I can only call on the Government of the Sudan and on the international community to work closely, and in good cooperation, to address all these challenges.

Turning to the humanitarian angle, the impact of the conflict remains significant. Since the resumption of the fighting, as I mentioned earlier, in Golo and Guldo on 17 September, humanitarian agencies estimate that about 5,500 newly displaced people, mainly women and children, have arrived in the Nertiti-north camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs), although community leaders in the camps report higher numbers — of up to 12,500 people. There are further reports of an additional 4,000 people having arrived in Guldo town. At this stage, none of the reported numbers can be verified. Local authorities have issued instructions to humanitarian agencies that they are to limit their activities only to old established caseloads, and should not verify, register or share information pertaining to newly arrived IDPs. Moreover, international non-governmental organizations have reported that all missions between Nertiti and Guldo have been stopped until further notice.

Despite those access and reporting restrictions, UNAMID continues to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance through logistical support and protection, while engaging the parties to immediately cease hostilities and the Government to allow immediate, full and unhindered access conflict areas in Jebel Marra.

Turn to the political situation, as members will recall, the road map agreement was signed at Addis Ababa on 8 August by the members of the Sudan Call. The African Union High-level Implementation Panel then convened talks between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/North, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minawi. Those talks were held from 9 to 14 August to consider draft agreements on humanitarian access and a cessation of hostilities in both Darfur the two Areas. Both sets of talks were suspended until further notice following persistent disagreements between the parties.

In the face of that impasse, the High-level Implementation Panel, the Special Envoy and UNAMID continued their engagement with the parties to try to bridge their differences. At the beginning of September, UNAMID held consultations with the leaders of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/North, the JEM and the Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minawi in Kampala. All restated their areas of contention in the talks and indicated that, if necessary flexibility were demonstrated by both parties on two issues — on the release of prisoners of war and on the mechanism for the oversight of humanitarian assistance — an agreement could be reached.

The Government and the Darfur armed movements, together with UNAMID, are expected to travel to Doha for engagement with the Government of Qatar on the way forward. The High-level Implementation Panel also held a new round of informal consultations in Addis Ababa last week end. Regrettably, the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid remains outside of the negotiation process, and no consultations with its leadership have taken place since the last meeting with the UNAMID Joint Special Representative, which took place last July in Paris.

Meanwhile on the ground in Darfur, on 7 September, President Al-Bashir hosted the Presidents of Chad and the Central African Republic and the Emir of Qatar at a ceremony to mark the end of the Darfur Regional Authority (DRA). On that occasion, he announced a new era of peace and stability for Darfur. And, on 21 September, the President issued a decree formally dissolving the Darfur Regional Authority and all bodies established under the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, with a few exceptions. On the same day, and as earlier promised by President Al-Bashir, the

Government released 21 children it claimed had been captured in clashes with the JEM in 2015.

With regard to the National Dialogue, on 26 September, President Al-Bashir officially received the recommendations of the National Dialogue Conference, which he pledged to implement following its conclusion on 10 October. As political disagreements remain over that end date, and as the Sudan Call — as it calls itself — maintains its rejection of the National Dialogue Conference, the political process remains seriously constrained.

I am, however, pleased to report a relative improvement in the issuance of visas to UNAMID personnel and the processing of ration containers for our troops. However, a significant amount of United Nations and contingent-owned equipment remains at Port Sudan, which continues to hamper the operational effectiveness of the Mission. During my most recent meetings with officials of the Government of the Sudan, they promised that measures would be taken to address bureaucratic and procedural impediments and to ensure the release of those shipments.

On 17 October, the African Union, the United Nations and the Government of the Sudan will resume their engagement on the exit strategy based on the parameters set by the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council. A critical step in that process will be the development of agreed criteria for gauging progress towards the UNAMID benchmarks agreed upon following the last convening of the Joint Working Group, in May.

Ending the protracted suffering of the civilian population in Darfur must remain the main priority of the international community. In that context, we are aware of the allegations regarding the use of chemical weapons against civilians by Government of the Sudan forces in Jebel Marra, as presented in the Amnesty International report that was released on 29 September. We have not come across any evidence regarding the use of chemical weapons in the Jebel Marra. At the same time, as Council members know, the Government of the Sudan has consistently denied any access by UNAMID to conflict areas in the Jebel Marra, which has clearly prevented the mission from being able to monitor effectively and report on the impact of the fighting.

I have to note further that an initial assessment by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has stated that without further information or evidence being made available, it is not possible at this stage for it to draw any conclusions based on the content of the Amnesty International report. I would therefore encourage the Government of the Sudan, which is party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, to extend its full cooperation to any future OPCW investigation, as in fact the Government in Khartoum has expressed it was ready to do in its statements to the media following the publication of the report, which underscores the absolute urgency of the need for a cessation of hostilities in Darfur and a need for the Security Council to act in unison to bring about an end to armed conflict in the region.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that, with the signature by all the parties to the political road map proposed by the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, we have taken an important step forward in the peace process. This now needs to be consolidated, and the parties should from now on implement both the letter and the spirit of the document and undertake to resume negotiations so as to come quickly to an accord on both the cessation of hostilities and the modalities of humanitarian access to the conflict zones. I would call on them to listen attentively to the hopes of the people, hopes that are focused on peace, stability and a somewhat better livelihood through development. We remain convinced that the Security Council will bring all the support needed for the cooperative effort of the international mediators to achieve those objectives.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Ladsous for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the member of the Council who wishes to make a statement.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have requested the floor in the understanding that these informational briefings for the members of the Security Council could also benefit from members expressing their opinions, without prejudice to the consultations that will follow, where we can address issues that require greater confidentiality.

Since this is the first time I am taking the floor under the your presidency, Sir, I congratulate you on having taken up this new responsibility. I also pledge the full support of my delegation. At the same time, I would like to thank Ambassador Gerard van Bohemen, Permanent Representative of New Zealand, and his entire team for

the excellent work they did during their presidency in the month of September. It was a particularly difficult month, not only in terms of logistics, but also in terms of the various developments that took place.

I thank Under-Secretary-General Hervé Ladsous for his introducing the report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/812). In my brief comments, I shall refer to three points: the political process, the humanitarian situation and the restrictions on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and humanitarian actors.

Uruguay welcomes the various steps forward mentioned by Mr. Ladsous that have taken place since the signing of the road map agreement last August 8 by various movements, including the Sudan Call, the Justice and Equality Movement, the Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minnawi, and others. The agreement the new signatories joined, which was facilitated by the African Union High-level Implementation Panel and had already been signed by the Government of the Sudan, has the objectives of paving the way to putting an end to the conflict in Darfur and the Two Areas and of addressing urgent humanitarian needs and the underlying causes of conflict. Unfortunately, as was also pointed out by Mr. Ladsous, we have not obtained entirely positive results and we are particularly concerned about the absence from the negotiating table of certain groups, including, and more recently, the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid, which continues to reject any type of dialogue.

With respect to the humanitarian situation, Uruguay reiterates its concern for the more than 2.5 million people who have been displaced, and we are encouraged by the reference in the Secretary-General's report to the fact that open hostilities have generally diminished in Darfur in recent months. In accordance with the information provided by the United Nations humanitarian team, more than 80,000 people, particularly women and children, have allegedly been displaced in Darfur since the beginning of the year, especially due to the clashes in the Jebel Marra area.

Against this backdrop, it is crucial that UNAMID personnel comply fully with the provisions of its mandate and that humanitarian actors have the necessary conditions to provide humanitarian assistance to the people affected by the conflict. It is also crucial that the Government of the Sudan guarantee without delay unhindered access for UNAMID and the humanitarian partners to the communities affected by the conflict with a view to carrying out monitoring and verification missions as well as to deliver humanitarian assistance.

Furthermore, while we note that there has been a relative improvement in the issuance of visas for UNAMID personnel and the dispatching of rations containers for the troops, we reiterate that in accordance with its obligations under the Status of Forces Agreement, the Government of the Sudan must take urgent measures to eliminate all bureaucratic obstacles and ensure that UNAMID enjoys the conditions necessary to full compliance with its mandate. As we have pointed out on several occasions in relation to operations in other areas, my delegation attaches particularly importance to the issue of States' compliance with their obligations in relation to United Nations operations in their territories.

In conclusion, I would like to express Uruguay's gratitude to all of UNAMID's personnel and the United Nations humanitarian country team and its partners, who continue to work tirelessly, often in difficult conditions, to achieve a sustainable peace in Darfur.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on taking up the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I also express my thanks and esteem to the outgoing President, the Permanent Representative of New Zealand, for his able guidance of the Council's work in September. I further thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2016/812), and Mr. Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his briefing.

The situation in Darfur in the reporting period reflects great improvement on the security front. The Sudan Armed Forces have succeeded in pushing back against rebel groups in all of the states and subregions of Darfur, with the exception of certain pockets of Jebel Marra, a subregion of Central Darfur, which is one of the five administrative units of Greater Darfur. I am just explaining the geography of the area we are looking at today. It is the subregion of the Jebel Marra that is being used by the/Abdul Wahid rebels.

The five Federal states of Darfur and the Government in Khartoum have spared no effort in restoring security and to prevent tribal conflicts.

The number of conflicts has declined and their consequences are now almost non-existent. According to humanitarian statistics, after the security situation improved, the number of voluntary returned internally displaced persons (IDPs) increased. More than 150,000 IDPs have returned to their villages and enjoy security and basic services in those villages, provided, most notably, by the brotherly State of Qatar and the Arab League under the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. The Sudanese Government is also doing its utmost to address the needs of displaced persons and those who wish to stay in camps by integrating such camps into villages and providing the necessary services.

At the beginning of September, with His Excellency the President of the Republic of the Sudan and the participation and support of His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani of Qatar, the President of Chad and the President of the Central African Republic, Darfur marked the end of the Darfur Regional Authority, which had been established pursuant to the 2011 Doha Document for Peace in Darfur to supervise the implementation of the Agreement's provisions. That Agreement, and in particular the administrative referendum, was fully implemented, in which the people of Darfur decided to keep the current system with the five states. There was broad participation, which means that the region's residents are now enjoying security and their rights and freedoms. That was also demonstrated by their participation in the administrative referendum and other activities, including construction, in order to change the face of a region that we hold very dearly.

The Sudanese Government is sparing no effort to ensure sound and comprehensive peace in the country, while pushing back the spectre of violence and war. The President of the Republic launched the National Dialogue initiative, with a special oversight committee that began deliberations so as to submit recommendations during to the National Dialogue Conference on 10 October. The door is open and everyone has been invited — those who hope to join these efforts for peace, stability and rejection of violence. We would like to build a country on a foundation of unanimity and consensus.

I therefore appeal to the international community and the Council to bring pressure to bear on all those who do not wish to join in the efforts of national dialogue. I would remiss were I not to mention the signing by some armed groups and political parties of the road map in Addis Ababa, under the auspices of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel. On the other hand, Abdul Wahid and his rebels have rejected all initiatives and appeals for peace and negotiation and are counting on support offered by some countries. From this forum, I would like to call upon all of those providing protection and support to put an end to it and to put pressure on the movement to ensure that it joins efforts in Darfur.

I would like to reiterate that it is high time to begin implementing the exit strategy for African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur to draw down on troop levels in a mission where there is really no more need for such troops, in particular in the west, north and south of Darfur. Once again, the Sudanese Government would like to see that drawdown carried out in a gradual manner, in several stages, to ensure that the Mission is handed over to the United Nations country team to work to rebuild peace and security in the country within the framework of development.

The report of the Secretary-General highlights several positive aspects in Darfur, notably the rebuilding of peace and a reduction in crime and banditism. The report also mentions the reduction in the number of tribal conflicts during the reporting period. There was also reference to the activities of armed groups. The Government's efforts to ensure peace and security in Darfur are also stressed in the report. Once again, I would like to reaffirm that our Government is determined to cooperate and coordinate efforts with the Mission to ensure that it is able to fully carry out its mandate, including the exit strategy, according to resolution 1769 (2007). Our Governmer has made a firm commitment to the Mission since its deployment to date and until the very last soldier leaves. I would also like to share the comments made by the Head of the Mission, who said that the issuance of visas is no longer a problem for the Mission and that the Sudanese Government has taken the necessary action in order to allow containers of rations to be shipped through.

(*spoke in English*)

Finally, 13 years ago, in 2003, conflict erupted in Darfur. At that time, it was considered to be the worst conflict in the world. In 2004, the N'Djamena Agreement was signed and followed up by the Abuja Agreement in 2006, but to no avail. Spoilers from within and outside of the Sudan effectively joined hands. In 2011, thanks to the joint efforts by the Government of the Sudan, the United Nations, the African Union and the Arab League, the Doha Agreement was concluded

and eventually implemented up to September this year, when we officially celebrated the end of the conflict.

During his meeting with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sudan last week, the Secretary-General thoughtfully and earnestly stated that, together, we had charted troubled waters and come a long way. Images of Darfur and its war were everywhere, and now we are talking about reconstruction, development and an exit strategy. Now is not the time to allow spoilers wearing various disguises and masks to prolong the conflict in the Sudan and destabilize the country. They will not budge but, together, with the Security Council, we are now more confident that that will not be allowed to happen.

The President: I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.